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THE Pamphlet Mission FOR FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

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SERMON, - - BY HENRY LANG, Zurich, Switzerland.

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The PAMPHLET MISSION has been established for the purpose of publishing a semi-monthly series of Liberal Religious pamphlets on the Unity, the Evolution, the Doctrines, the Bibles, and the Leaders of Religion; on the Relations of Religion to Science, to Devotion and Conduct, and on kindred topics, written by men whose word combines Liberal thought with religious feeling. Each pamphlet will contain an Essay or Sermon, (original or reprint,) together with from six to ten pages of "Notes and News," made up of short editorials, gleanings from the freshest religious thought, and news-items about Liberal work, Liberal books, etc. It is hoped that the publication will meet the want not only of persons already connected with Liberal organizations, but also, especially, of *isolated Liberals*—the fives and tens and twenties in small towns—men and women thirsty for such words as these pamphlets will carry. Besides their use in the home, they can do good service among friends and neighbors, as well as furnish regular material for Sunday meetings and discussions in places hardly to be reached by Liberal preachers.

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My Grace is Sufficient for Thee.

A SERMON BY HENRY LANG, LATE PASTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, ZURICH, SWITZERLAND.

Translated from the German for the Pamphlet Mission by
CHARLES W. WENDTE.

"And that I might not be too much lifted up by the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me, that I might not be too much lifted up. In respect to this I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and he said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."—2 *Corinthians*, xii:7, 8, 9. (*Dr. Noyes' Trans.*)

It is an experience in the life of the apostle Paul, which is to occupy our attention in the present discourse; not an event of importance which has affected the course of human destiny, or is thought worthy of mention in the historic books of the race, but a simple trait in the private history of the human heart, and yet one which yields us rich material for thought and religious edification. The apostle evidently speaks of an oppressive bodily affliction which he bore about with him. We do not know with certainty in what it consisted, but the connection in which he speaks of it, the peculiar expressions which he employs when referring to it, together with other passages in his epistles which give us some notion of his bodily characteristics, put it almost beyond a doubt, that the frequent occasions of a high spiritual ecstasy which he enjoyed—manifestations and revelations of the Lord he calls them, the science of to-day calls them visions—were in him accompanied by physical attacks which threw the apostle in convulsive spasms to the ground, and for a time shook and rent his organism in the

most terrible manner. How alarming and painful such visitations must have been to himself, and how great a hindrance to his apostolic usefulness in the eyes of the many! For it was the common belief of that day that persons so afflicted were demoniacs, and that these conditions were the attacks of wicked spirits, who thus possessed and tormented their unfortunate victims. Three times Paul prayed to God to take away this scourge from him. But in vain! Each time he received only the answer: My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness! Surely, this is an incident which invites us to meditation and yields us rich lessons in spiritual trust. How often have we not also, amid the disappointments of earth, the antagonisms of the world, the pains and pangs of this temporal life, received no other answer from the Eternal Spirit to whom we raised our sighs and prayers than this: My grace is sufficient for thee. Well for us if we can feel that it is sufficient. For in all reason we ought never to ask more of God than this, and this one thing, always granted us when we earnestly seek it, is enough, and more than enough for all our need.

Eternal Source of Light, Thou Giver of all good and perfect gifts, our Father! As oft as the world lays upon us the cross of renunciation, as oft as our heart bleeds and cries to thee in distress and need, give us to hear thy kindly: My grace is sufficient for thee! and impart to us the trustful and obedient heart that is truly content with that answer of thy grace.

My grace is sufficient for thee! Such is to-day as of old the divine answer to the thousands of complaints, sighs and petitions we raise to heaven, *and in reason we ought not to expect more from God than this.* Here let me point out a vital distinction between religion once and now; between the piety of previous generations and that of men and women to-day. The piety of a former age was more exacting in its demands on God. It expected of him that he should be able and willing at any time to change the outward order of the Universe by the interposition

of his Divine Hand, in response to the wishes of the human heart, and in order to specially favor his human children. It was believed that God, through his power of free and immediate self-determination, would favor his worshippers by granting this one the good he desired, or removing from that one the evil he feared, and it was this supposed human influence on the will of God which constituted one of the chief objects of divine worship, and especially of prayer. So Paul petitioned God three times to remove his bodily affliction from him, evidently in the supposition that God, if he thought right to listen to his prayer, could bring about the desired result by virtue of his power over nature and the laws he had made. Of what significance—reasoned the men of the olden time—is God's omnipotence if his arm is not strong enough to suspend his laws when they injure me, or to arrest the order of his universe when it threatens to destroy the purposes of my life? and why do I speak of his love and call him Father, if he cannot or will not even do what every human father both desires and does to protect his child from danger and rescue it from evil?

Now, it is true, the men who reasoned in this way, in so far as they were really and truly religious, always corrected the conclusions of their understanding concerning God, by the practical piety of their hearts and lives. When their prayers remained unanswered, when the course of things went against their fervent wishes, and their dearest hopes were disappointed by the inexorable order of the world, they bowed humbly before the majesty of God's decrees and declared, "God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and his ways are higher than our ways. He doeth all things well, all things work together for good to them that love God. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God. His grace is sufficient or thee!" So they arrived, though by a round-about way, at the goal of a pure, unselfish and humble piety, which thirsted only after God, the living God, and blest in that possession cared naught for anything else in earth or heaven, his grace sufficient unto them.

The religious mind to-day has an easier task. It does not need this indirect way of arriving at the goal of a divine trust. It is prepared at the outset to make no other request of God than that he will give us Himself. We do not ask of him to change the order of things for our sakes, or to alter his laws at pleasure in order to gratify us, because we hold it to be presumptuous on our part to make our opinions and wishes, the opinions and wishes of weak and fallible beings whose life is but of yesterday—the measure of the great universe of God. Nor do we believe that God can himself do this, since he can do nothing against his own nature; for he is the All-perfect, who has no need to interpose and alter his designs; he is the All-knowing, who has also included my life and yours in the divine order and destiny of the world; he is the Eternal, who, above the limitations of time, does not in human fashion pass from one thing to another, and decree now this and now that, but has foreseen and fore-ordained all things and conducts them according to his own infinite and holy nature. Therefore, the enlightened worshipper to-day says: "Send me what thou wilt, O God, be it a joy or a sorrow; I am content since both alike come from thy hand. Whatever may flow to me out of the eternal order, life or death, health or sickness, plenty or want, gain or loss, I know that it flows to me out of the natural course of things and the laws which control it, in whose working I find the expression of thy thought and will. But I know also that nothing, neither things present nor things to come, neither life nor death nor any creature can separate me from thy love. Thy grace is sufficient for me!"

Here I may note another difference between once and now, between the piety of previous generations and that of men and women to-day. In former times when men encountered the hard blows of fate or passed through terrible and painful experiences in life they were not content with the answer "my grace is sufficient for thee," but they demanded in addition an insight into the particular purposes of the Almighty in each and every instance; they sought to know why God had acted

in this or in that way towards them. So Paul finding that his bodily ailment does not pass away in spite of his supplications, falls into a deep study over the purpose of God in sending him this painful affliction as a constant companion through life, and he thinks he has found the design of God in so doing "that I might not be too much lifted up by the abundance of the revelations, there was given me this messenger of Satan to buffet me." So reasoned the ancients almost universally. They inquired: what did God have in view when he sent an earthquake to shatter yonder city? Why did he visit this land with a pestilence and spare that country from its ravages? In what have we sinned, or what have we omitted to do that God should bring this evil upon our house, that he should tear from our loving arms this child, our dearest possession? So they questioned the ways of Providence and interpreted them now in this manner, now in that, and the answer always corresponded to the degree of culture the inquirer had attained, to the often narrow and bigoted views of his particular age; frequently to the interests of a selfish and superstitious clergy, or the impulses of a revengeful and envious heart. But however the answer might be framed, it always amounted to this, that God especially ordained all these hostile occurences in nature—deformity, famine, pestilence and war—because of the sins of those who were smitten, as a punishment for their evil-doing.

But to man at the present day the divine voice declares: do not indulge any more in these presumptuous questions, these arbitrary and futile explanations. My grace is sufficient for thee. Nature goes her own way according to eternal and unchangeable laws. Learn to know these laws and seek out the causes of things, and thou wilt discover more and more why everything happens as it does and not in some other way. But, so far as thou art concerned, thou child of man, set in the midst of this world of natural forces and laws, I am not a mere man that I should have such and such purposes as thou hast them. I have but one great purpose, to which all else is made subservient—to make of thee a man in mine own likeness. Therefore

sickness and health, hunger and plenty, drought and harvest and all the experiences of outward and physical life are sent to stimulate thy inner nature, to awaken thee to thought, to develop thy soul, enrich thy imagination, strengthen thy conscience and bring the slumbering powers within thee to light and activity, that through all the hindrances and trials, the helps and blessings of the natural world, my child may seek and find me, may know the Father who is not far from any one, in whom all live, and move, and have their being. This is the goal of life, to which all I send thee is only a means; this is my grace which is sufficient for thee!

Has our religion lost anything because we ask no more from God than this? O that each one of us might learn to know how sufficient and more than sufficient this is. This one thing clears the mind, quiets the heart and purifies and strengthens the will of man.

When we trace back all that happens to us to this one source, out of which flows alike joy and sorrow, health and sickness, want and plenty, life and death, then our destinies cease to be mere disconnected fragments, a mere chaos of atoms and accidents; they are interwoven with the all-embracing, all-upholding order of the world, and therefore wise, just and good, each appropriate in its place. We gain an insight into that word of ancient piety: God doeth all things well. As we seek to know what purpose is fulfilled by these changeful destinies of man, we soon discover that they are useful in promoting the highest object of our being. They tear us away from mere worldly interests and bring us to our true selves. They are a school for character, a discipline of our spiritual nature. If we may express this truth by a simile drawn from human relations, and therefore comprehensible by all—for in all our speech concerning the divine and the eternal we must avail ourselves of human analogies—as an earthly father rears his child with mingled caresses and chastisements, denials and gifts, that it may grow up in the stature of a perfect manhood. So God educates our race through struggles and sufferings, and

to those that love him all these things work together for good.

Hence, we recognize and adore in the destinies that are sent us a loving Providence, that wounds us indeed, but also heals, yes, that heals us by means of these very wounds. This suffices us, however much may still in its detail be inexplicable. In this light the world grows comprehensible to us, and our minds become clear with a new understanding of nature and of life.

My grace is sufficient for thee. How this thought calms and contents the heart of man! though it bleed in anguish, though it beat fiercely in its revolt against the decrees of God; though it cry aloud in its first outburst of pain; yet, as soon as it discerns through the clouds the face of him who is more to us in our hour of need than father, mother, brother or child, who lends his grace to fill our empty soul, left bare and desolate by the world, who brings hope aud strength on his celestial wing when we are cast down in utter weakness and despair, then peace enters our breast, then our terrible grief melts into a gentle sorrow, the eye smiles through its tears, the bitter complaint swells into a psalm of praise: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." What indeed, are earthly joys and sorrows? One thing follows another in the changeful play of human destiny. Let them go! You have the one thing that compensates for all, fills the place of all. His grace is sufficient for thee, O human heart! Learn to renounce thine earthly joys, for in renunciation there lies a mightier strength.

Finally, trust in the grace of God purifies and strengthens the will of man. It puts an end to our impatient wishes and clamorous demands. It melts and refines that self-seeking which formed so large a part of the religious ideas and practices of our spiritual ancestors. All the craving for favors and rewards which formerly disfigured religion is ended for us. Man, no longer demands that God shall become the instrument of his sensuous wants and personal interests. He asks only this, that he may become the instrument of God, that his little, swiftly-passing life,

may, through its sufferings and enjoyments, its service and its gratitude, its ecstasy and its pain, contribute something to the increase of the great and glorious kingdom of God. Directed to this one object, an object which includes all else within it, the will of man first gains its true strength and consecration. Feeling itself in harmony with the power which gives to clouds and stars, to floods and winds their appointed course and way, man attains to that independence of all temporal and finite concerns, which enables him to oppose boldly a world of care and trouble, of hate and scorn. With a divine assurance, he declares: If God be with me, who can be against me? What can separate me from his love? Amid the ruins of his earthly happiness, cast down from the highest pinnacles of worldly honor and success into lowliness and shame, the soul that trusts in God still bears a heaven within itself. With a strong hand and cheery hope it re-enters the struggle and conflict of life, convinced that its faith can remove mountains, and that all things serve those who dare and do with God.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." Answer me, is not this enough for our minds, our hearts, our wills? At least, it was enough for a Paul. After he was sure of the divine answer to his prayer, he asked no more. Contented, richly blessed he went on his way; yes, he made out of his very wants and deficiencies his chiefest boast, and wealth, and triumph. Of what importance was he, or his personal fortunes? It was God's honor he sought, and that honor was the greater, the might of God's spirit was displayed the more abundantly, the weaker and more decrepit the instrument with which He accomplished such great results. His strength was made perfect in the weakness of his human servants. Therefore, Paul henceforth did not cease to glory in his personal defects and misfortunes and out of his thorny life of disgrace, want and persecution there sounds forth like the song of a lark in the heights, that triumphal chant; "I am of a cheerful spirit in the midst of sorrow and needs and persecution, in hunger and in nakedness; I can do all things through him who strengthens me. I glory in

mine infirmities, I know how to abound and how to be abased. I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." And it was enough for another, a yet greater than Paul. Three times Jesus prayed in Gethsemane: "Let this cup pass from me, O Father!" But he received only one and the self-same answer: My grace is sufficient for thee! And Jesus bowed to the divine decree. Bathed in the dews of this grace, with pure hands and a holy heart, he passed through a world of sin, through shame and scorn, through pain and want to the celestial heights of perfection, honored in his disgrace, rich in his poverty, sanctified in his death.

Let us look up to these high and holy examples whose life we aspire after as the life of those whom God hath blest. Let us learn from them to seek our happiness and our greatness in this one thing alone: "*My grace is sufficient for thee!*"

"There are three possible views in regard to the origin of species. The first asserts Divine agency by *miraculous* creation, and therefore denies any *process*; the second asserts *evolution-process, but* denies Divine agency; the third asserts *Divine agency by evolution-process.* So, also, are there three corresponding views in regard to the origin of the individual,—of you, of me, and each of us. The first is that of the little innocent, who thinks that God made him as he (the little innocent) makes *dirt-pies;* the second is that of the little hoodlum, who says: 'I wasn't made at all, I growed;' the third is the usual adult belief,—that we are made by a process of evolution. Do you not observe, then, that, in the matter of the origin of species, many good theologians and pietists are in the position of the little innocent? They think that species were made *without natural process.* On the other hand, most evolutionists are in the position of the little hoodlum, for they think that species, *because they 'growed,' wern't made at all.* But there is a higher and more rational philosophy than either, which holds that the ideas of *making* and of *growing* are not inconsistent with each other; that evolution does not, and cannot, destroy the conception of, or the belief in, an intelligent Creator and Author of the Cosmos. This view combines and reconciles the two preceding antagonistic views, and is, therefore, more comprehensive, more rational, and more true. But let us not fail to do justice,—let us not overlook the fact that the most important and noblest truths are overlooked only by the hoodlum and materialist.—Prof. JOSEPH LE CONTE, *in Popular Science Monthly.*

Notes and News.

Says the *Register:* "What a change must have been wrought by internal development in American Methodism when one of its ministers can speak of revivalists as religious tramps, who give more trouble than they are worth!"

Whittier, newly expresses his religious views as follows: "I am not a Universalist, for I believe in the possibility of the perpetual loss of the soul that persistently turns from God in the next life as in this. But I do believe, also, that the Divine love and compassion follow us in all worlds, and that the Heavenly Father will do the best that is possible for every creature He has made. What that will be must be left to His infinite wisdom and goodness."

The Methodist ministers of Chicago, at a recent Monday's meeting, discussed the question of capital and labor, and three of the leading communists were present and participated, by permission, in the discussion. This looks like genuine fair play. Now let these Methodist brethren discuss next some of the questions at issue between them and Liberals in religion, and permit representative Liberals to be present and answer.

At the May meeting of the Iowa Unitarian Association held at Des Moines, Rev. D. H. Rogan of Newton, who has grown out from Orthodox Congregationalism to Liberal Congregationalism (and taken his congregation with him) read a paper on "The Need of Courage and Self-Sacrifice on the Part of Rational Religionists." The paper was spoken of very warmly by the Iowa brethren, as a production of unusual earnestness, spirituality and power. We are glad to see that it is published in the *Christian Register* of July 6.

The Church of the Messiah, Chicago, observed June 3, as "Flower Sunday." The Fourth Church celebrated June 30 as "Flower and Memorial Sunday."——A Union Sociable of all the Unitarian Churches in the City was held at Mr. Collyer's Church, Tuesday evening, July 2.

The Yearly Meeting of the Pennsylvania "Progressive Friends" was held at Longwood, June 13-15. Prof. C. D. B. MILLS, of Syracuse, N. Y., presided. Among the speakers were Revs. SAMUEL LONGFELLOW, of Germantown, C. E. HUSSEY, of Massachusetts, N. A. HASKELL, of Vineland, E. I. GALVIN of Washington Territory, Miss MARY GREW of Philadelphia, and Mr. MEECHAM from among the Indians of the West. The discussions on religion, education, temperance, the freedmen, the Indians, and juvenile literature, were full of interest; and, altogether, the meeting seems to have been the most satisfactory for many years.

"The Friends of Progress" held their usual Yearly Meeting at Waterloo, N. Y., on the 1st and 2d of June. Among the speakers announced were C. D. B. MILLS, W. S. BELL, H. L. GREEN and Prof. J. E. OLIVER. "Aiming, as this meeting does, at the substance rather than the name, or any outward form of religious life; at culture and character, the humanities, rather than any speculation or observance of dogmatic worship, it inculcates the study of science and the laws of the universe rather than the dogmas of theology."

Canon FARRAR, in answering the question "What is Heaven?" says: "Oh to be honest, true, noble, sincere, genuine, pure, holy, to the heart's inmost core,—is not that Heaven? Is not Heaven a state rather than a place? Is it not a temper rather than a habitation? Is it not to *be something* rather than to *go somewhere?*

Rev. J. LL. JONES, and his Society at Janesville, Wis., have been doing a very enterprising and praise-worthy thing. They have been carrying on an art club for eight or nine months, which has very vigorously prosecuted the study of art in several different lines; and to crown all they closed up their season of art work, the middle of June, with a Loan Art Exhibition of oil paintings, statuary, engravings and photographs illustrative of the old masters, bric-a-brac, etc., the whole comprising an art collection which, considering the circumstances, must be called surprisingly large and valuable.

LECKY tells us in his last work that "over a great part of the continent of Europe, the lay intellect is almost divorced from Catholicism." But whither is it tending?—to the adoption of some form of rational religion in the place of Catholicism? Not so; the reaction from superstition is not rational religion; it is sneering skepticism or cold atheism and materialism. "The class of minds that once followed BOSSUET or PASCAL now follows VOLTAIRE or COMTE." Perhaps the most dreadful thing about religious superstition always is its seemingly inevitable tendency to burn out men's faith and reverence, and leave them religious cinders.

Personals.—Rev. ROBERT COLLYER started for the "other side the water" July 8th. He expects to be gone about three months.——Revs. C. W. WENDTE of Cincinnati, GEO. CHAINEY of Evansville, Ind., J. LL. JONES of Janesville, Wis., W. C. GANNETT of St. Paul, and BROOKE HERFORD of Chicago, go to New England for vacation "outings."——Rev. Dr. MAX LILIENTHAL, the liberal Jewish Rabbi of Cincinnati, recently preached in the Unitarian Church of that city by invitation of its minister, Rev. C. W. WENDTE, who shared the services with him. ——Rev. F. L. HOSMER is expected home from Europe next September.

Rev. OLIVER STEARNS, D. D. who has been for many years at the head of the Divinity School of Harvard University, has resigned on account of ill-health and advancing age, and Prof. C. C. EVERETT has been appointed to his place. The *Register* says: "This appointment will meet with spontaneous ratification from all sides. No man could be named who enjoys in larger measure the general confidence, or who better represents that combination of catholic sympathies with reverent freedom and consecrated scholarship which rightly belongs to a school of the prophets."

The noise raised in England by the prosecution of Mrs. ANNIE RESANT, has caused ASA K. BUTTS, of New York, to reprint her little work on "The Law of Population: Its Consequences and its Bearings upon Human Conduct and Morals." It seems to be written in an earnest spirit, while the facts it presents, and the view it takes of impending evil, are startling. The remedy it sets forth seems doubtful, though to earnest, studious minds it may be suggestive and helpful.

The Free-thinkers of Milan, Mo., have given B. F. UNDERWOOD, Mrs. PARRY, and other lecturers, large and enthusiastic audiences lately. Mrs. PARRY is reported as an able and eloquent lecturer. She has been for some years a Spiritualist, but has given that up for rational thought and the facts of science; so says the *Investigator*. That paper also reports W. S. BELL, a good writer and speaker, as in the lecture field most of the time.

Two honored and long tried soldiers in the ranks of Liberal Religion have recently fallen—WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT and CHARLES C. BURLEIGH. A Janesville paper brings us an able sermon preached upon the former by Rev. J. LL. JONES. The speaker calls Mr. BRYANT "if not the greatest, yet the stateliest American" of our day; and traces his greatness to three sources. (1) He was well born. (2) He was well educated. (3) He had a noble and manly religion, which could not fail to develop what was most genuine and noble in him.

Mr. FROTHINGHAM says it is not so much the cry for bread that is ringing through the land as it is the cry for fancy cakes.

New Books.—HOUGHTON, OSGOOD & Co. have just issued an American edition of "Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis," by MARTIN HAUG. Price, $4.50. HAUG stands among the highest authorities, and this volume will be one of great value to persons interested in the study of oriental religions.

F. B. SANBORN, of Boston, is writing a new life of John Brown, and wants to obtain copies of all letters written by him, as well as to learn of all points of interest in his life that have not yet been developed.

The second volume of PUTNAM'S "Current Discussion," is on "Questions of Belief." It contains the *Nineteenth Century* "Symposiums" on "The Soul and Future Life," and "The Influence upon Morality of a Decline in Religious Belief." These deeply interesting discussions need neither praise nor explanation from us, so well known are they. Furtermore the volume contains FRED. HARRISON'S eloquent and beautiful defense of impersonal immortality—the paper which gave rise to the first "symposium;" also, "The Course of Modern Thought," by G. H. LEWES; "The Condition and Prospect of the Church of England," by THOMAS HUGHES, and "Is Life Worth Living?" by W. H. MALLOCH. So much strong, vigorous and plain writing on theological subjects will not be found in any other volume. Whoever wants to know how the best thinkers of the day, of all schools, view immortality, must read this book.

One of the most interesting volumes that has come from the press this year is JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE'S "Memorial and Biographical Sketches." There is just one defect in it; it is too sketchey. One wants more of it; that which is given is so good. The articles on Washington, Shakspeare and Rousseau are excellent. Mr. CLARKE makes Rousseau a good Christian, and vindicates his character and teachings as strongly as Mr. CHADWICK does those of Voltaire. Interesting sketches are given of Geo. D. Prentice, the elder Booth, George Keats, (a brother of the poet,) and a noted Presbyterian orator, Breckenridge. Mr. CLARKE met or knew these men in Louisville. But his accounts of his grandfathers, James Freeman and William Hall, and of his friends Sumner, Parker, Howe, Channing, Gannett, May, Walter Channing, and Miss Dimock, are so absorbingly full of interest as to make us regret when the end of each is reached. Many of these sketches have before been published, and others are parts of funeral discourses; but though the volume is so fragmentary in its contents, one eagerly reads over these words of delightful appreciation, and is thankful that they have been given to the public in this collective form.

"Foundation Stones of the Church of the Unity, Evansville, Indiana," is a neat volume just published, and sold by GEO. C. SMITH &

Co., of Evansville, at the price of $1.00, for the benefit of the church. In contains an introductory account of the starting of this church by Rev. J. H. HEYWOOD, Rev. ROBERT COLLYER'S sermon at the dedication of the church, sermons by Rev. GEO. CHAINEY *in memoriam* of Col. Philip Hornbrook and his sister, who did more than all other persons to bring this church into existence, and five other sensible, radical and earnest sermons by Mr. CHAINEY. It altogether makes a very neat and readable volume, which many will be glad to have.

S. P. PUTNAM has not only shown himself capable of doing good missionary work for radical religion in North Platte and Omaha, but he has produced a poem of considerable beauty and sustained power of conception, in his *Prometheus* There certainly are many fine passages in this work, and the whole idea is carried out well. Barring some minor defects, the poem is a good one, and the conception of *Prometheus* as Moral Insight gaining victory over Free Will, Love, Reverence and Imagination, is nobly set forth. Under the garb of the old Greek mythology, an earnest plea is made for rational religion. Mr. PUTNAM gives proof of being able to do excellent poetical work, and closer attention to minor details will help him to produce a poem worthy of the promise made in the best portions of *Prometheus.*

Since writing our notice of "The Liberal Guide," (No. 7, p. 165,) a copy of "Good Morals and Gentle Manners for Schools and Families," by ALEX. M. GOW, has been examined. It covers much the same ground as the first part of that work, and in many respects is preferable. Its three parts treat of moral, municipal and social law. By simple anecdotes and illustrations, and in an easy and clear manner, it presents those moral lessons which all need to learn. We can most heartily commend it. Though prepared for common schools, it could most appropriately and profitably be used in Sunday Schools. Indeed, some simple and earnest presentation of the moral principles which lead to character and manhood, ought to be given in our Sunday Schools. The endless inanities of the International Lessons, and their remoteness from the life of to-day, seem eminently fitted to make Sunday Schools breeding places for dogmatism, instead of helpers towards a purer and holier life. "Why be moral?" "What is morality?" Can we do any better than to answer these questions for the boy or girl of from twelve to sixteen years of age, as the little book before us would enable the Sunday School teacher to do?—G. W. C.

The Birth of Jesus.—In his little book on "The Birth of Jesus," Dr. MILES has undertaken to show how early Christian history has been perverted and the supernatural birth of Jesus taught, contrary to the plain meaning of the Gospels. He has made an interesting and an instructive book. For the student, however, it contains too little; and to fully answer the purpose of the author, should have

reached further back, into those influences which have deified so many great men. Jesus, the plain Hebrew reformer, was not deified by any wanton or perverse failure of men to see what he was, and the spirit which made him God is in the Gospels as well as in the history of the second century. Only by reading between the lines of the New Testament can he see what he was in his actual life. Assuming that the Gospels teach the natural birth of Jesus, Dr. MILES shows how miraculous birth came to be accepted. This part of the book, it seems to us, is simply an attempt to get out of a difficulty; while that very theologizing tendency, of which HEDGE writes in his book recently mentioned, is the only one which explains the New Testament. The chapters on the growth of belief in the deity of Christ, the Apostles' creed, and faith in Mary as the mother of God, are full of interest. The book we heartily commend to our readers interested in the historical facts about the early history of Christianity. In our opinion, however, the only interpretation of the birth of Jesus, which can stand the test of time, is that contained in the opening chapters of the New Testament portion of the "Bible for Learners." We hope soon to accept Mr. GANNETT's suggestion and give a full notice of it.—G. W. C.

The Bible for Learners.—(ROBERTS BROS., Boston. JANSEN, MCCLURG & Co., Chicago.) We have already (in No. 5) given an extended notice of this book, which we do not hesitate to pronounce the most valuable popular work on the Bible that has appeared in this country. The publication of the second volume, however, completing the Old Testament, and containing a very full index of volumes I and II, gives us a reason for mentioning it again. We cannot do better than quote, with cordial endorsement, the following notice from the *Literary World*, of Boston, a paper, by the way, edited by an orthodox clergyman, but a man of breadth, scholarship and candor.

"It is beyond our limits to give more than the most general idea of a work which endeavors to popularize, for all but children, the most self-consistent and rationalistic Biblical criticism of the day. There certainly can be no severer test of the intellectual coherency and actual religious worth of such criticism than an attempt of this kind. But we say, without hesitation, to every person who is interested to know the bible, and is attracted to this work, that none but a pronounced bigot can object to the tone in which it is written. Taking up in historical order the narratives of the Old Testament, Dr. OORT reproduces them, as they there stand, in a familiar, but not childish style, and then goes on in the most reverential and constructive spirit to separate what he considers the historical from the unhistorical elements, and to draw the moral and spiritual lessons upon which he is always intent. In the elucidation of the text, he makes use of a mass of information derived from all quarters of his-

torical research, which nowhere else, to our knowledge, is accessible to the English reader; and this he does without pedantry, and with a very rare talent for popularization. The great majority of Bible-readers will find many beliefs, which they have held unquestionable, questioned here, ar set aside as untenable; but if they believe that religion is the highest reasonableness they will welcome a work which calmly, reverentially, and with a deep religious intention, sets forth the well-considered views of very wise, able, and religious men. The Bible is to them, not 'the book of *our* religion, but of *religion*,' 'because the place of honor in the religious life of mankind, and of each man in particular, belongs to the person of Jesus, and because it is upon Jesus that the whole Bible turns.' Errors and mistakes there must be, even with the soberest scholarship and the purest intentions; but we have no hesitation in commending these volumes of Dr. OORT's to orthodox and liberal, to believers in the Bible and unbelievers, as a very able and laudable attempt to illustrate the Old Testament, with all the aids of modern physical and historical science, for those who cannot be critical students, but who wish to know the facts and the principles of the life of the people that has given to the world a clearer morality and a deeper piety than any other, ancient or modern, has shown. The work is one of genuine value to all students of Biblical literature."

We are glad to make this quotation from such a source as the *Literary World*. A work like the "Bible for Learners" which makes our Scriptures reasonable and consistent, demands our admiration; and to see it cordially accepted by the best students and broadest thinkers gives at least a little promise of a new day in biblical studies in this country, where everything that looks like honest and thorough study has been, and is even yet, pretty generally rejected.

Apropos the above, here comes something which is DECIDEDLY RICH!! The *Herald and Presbyter*, published in Cincinnati, recently gave two favorable notices of the "Bible for Learners" and commended it to its readers as "very useful and instructive to all classes." In its last issue, however, it has discovered its mistake, and heads its editorial page with an alarmed and denunciatory article entitled, "A Dangerous Book!" In order to excuse its want of vigilance in commending so unorthodox and nefarious a publication, it admits that its book reviews are usually made without any examination of the works themselves, and from a mere glance at the title-page and table of contents! Thereupon the *Herald and Presbyter* withdraws its favorable opinion of the book, quotes from its pages to show its dangerous character, and brands it as an infidel and incendiary publication. The whole editorial produces a most ludicrous impression, and is probably the result of considerable trepidation and a severe "whipping in" behind the scenes. "Look here, upon this picture, and on this!"

Another Way to start a Liberal Religious Society.—In a late issue we told the story of Marshalltown, Iowa; how the Liberals there went to work to establish a free church, founded on practical righteousness. We must tell now how they do things in Colorado. A communication in a recent number of the *Greeley Tribune* says: "There are men and women in and about Greeley who do not belong to any church organization. Some were raised in faiths that have but few representatives here; some have voluntarily severed their relations to the church, and claim that they are reaching out into the ocean of truth further than the churches dare reach; and others still have never put forth any claims as religious people. While many of these men and women do not feel at home in the churches, they see and acknowledge the culture which the Church gives, mainly through its ministers, who are cultured men. Some of these have formed themselves into a society for the discussion of religious, moral and philosophical subjects, and other important topics; and having hired Mr. POST's hall, propose to hold meetings there every Sunday afternoon. The purpose of this society is not to attack any particular religion or promulgate any particular tenet, but to discuss all proper subjects earnestly and fully, asking the question, 'What is the *truth* in this matter?'" At one of the meetings a lecture was read by a member of the society on Mohammedanism, which was discussed by several persons. The exercises at this meeting consisted of two selections by the choir, a poem by H. A. HAYNES, lecture by Dr. W. P. WELCH, discussion, and singing of "Leaf by leaf the roses fall." We wish such societies could be formed in very many places where there is not the financial ability, or the intellectual agreement, necessary to sustain a minister. To do so, however, requires work and energy of such an amount and quality as are quite too often lacking. It is this very lack that makes so many liberal churches fail, even *with* the aid of a talented minister, fine choir, elegant church, and all the accompaniments of outward success.—G. W. C.

The question is being discussed in the Chicago papers, "Is Dr. CLINTON LOCKE, rector of Grace Episcopal Church, (one of the oldest and most eminent ministers of the city,) orthodox?" A writer in the *Times* calls attention to a recently published sermon of Dr. LOCKE's, and says: "Had these words been uttered two months ago, when the public mind was full of excitement on that subject, they would have added not a little to the interest in the debate, and even now they afford a fine opportunity for some zealous heresy-hunter to make himself notorious by attacking a man of Dr. LOCKE's high position and acknowledged ability." The writer then proceeds to quote, to the extent of perhaps half a column, from Dr. LOCKE's sermon, and

closes thus: "Several things here are worthy of notice. The first is his (the Doctor's) pungent and powerful arraignment of Calvinism. He not only calls it 'hideous, gloomy, and distorted,' but says it is 'one of the greatest enemies to true religion the world has ever known, and a pure invention of man.' Now this language is certainly a very grave charge against the Presbyterians, for example, who hold and teach that doctrine. What has Prof. PATTON to say? Another point, and the one to which attention is more particularly directed, is Dr. LOCKE's explicit avowal of his belief in after-death probation. Speaking of the general Protestant belief that the destiny of all souls is fixed from the moment of death, he says: 'I thank God that from the age of fourteen I utterly refused to believe any such horrible dogmas. I thank God that I never taught any such theory from this altar.' Dr. LOCKE clearly believes and teaches that probation and the offer of mercy and salvation do not end with this life, but are continued after death in the 'intermediate' state, at least until the resurrection. Now all this seems very reasonable, and gives a more hopeful view of the future condition of our race than is usually held in the churches called orthodox; but the question is not, is it *true*, but is it *orthodox*? And has an 'orthodox' minister a right to hold and teach such views?" If so, then the puzzle grows more puzzling than ever: What is orthodoxy?

"Since it appears that no very eminent man is prepared to defend *eternal hell-fire*, it will hardly be wondered that Canon FARRAR feels encouraged to bring forward No. 2 of his catalogue of heresies. He celebrated a recent important religious occasion by broaching a view of the *atonement* which may be described as withdrawing that doctrine from service for repairs. He said that the doctrine as it has been adopted century after century by sects and schools, makes God out to be cruel, wrathful, remorseless, inexorable—needing, like some heathen idol, to be appeased from fury by the spectacle of anguish, hiding under the name of justice acts of colossal tyranny, predestinating millions of his creatures before their very birth to infinite torture, accepting them only by a legal fiction which wreaked upon the innocent the full vengeance he demanded for the guilty. What the atonement is in its divine and transcendent sense, the canon of Westminster declared to be 'an incomprehensible mystery,' and that is what may be called removing it from active duty for repairs. The serpent, becoming unsightly to his worshippers, entered an ark and came out a dove. What the atonement will be when it is next unveiled was predicted in the Canon's further declaration that all men could know about Christ's death is that it was a pledge of the divine love for man." —M. D. CONWAY.

German Liberal Christians in America.—In our issue No. 7, we gave a brief account of the *Atheistic* or *Secularist* Congregations of Germans in America, which was supplemented in No. 9 by an interesting letter from a German Liberal upon the same subject. We keep our promise to give in this number a brief account of the *Theistic* German Liberals, or German Liberal *Christians*, in this country:

The German Bund, or Union of the Independent Evangelical Protestant Churches of North America, is an association of liberal religious congregations and ministers, which was formed in October, 1877, by uniting three separate organizations at St. Louis, Cincinnati and Pittsburg into one central body, the three previously existing associations being continued as local branches. The object of this Bund, as stated in their constitution, is "by uniting all who claim the right of a free self-determination in the Christian religious life, to make this life among themselves ever purer, more beautiful and effective, and also to preserve and defend the rights of Protestantism from all external limitations of its freedom of thought and conscience."

Another article declares that "the only historic source of faith is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the interpretation of which is committed to the reason, as penetrated by the christian idea, and to free examination and proof." This association holds a yearly conference, maintains a weekly paper in Cincinnati, and another at Pittsburg, together with a monthly organ at St. Louis. It includes as yet but a small number of preachers and churches—hardly more than half-a-hundred all told—but probably represents the most advanced thought short of actual unbelief and denial, to be found among the Germans of the United States. Prominent among its ministers are EBERHARD, of St. Louis, SCHOLZ and EISENLOHR, of Cincinnati, the three brothers THOMAS, Dr. SCHAFFRANEK, JONAS, FLEISCHER and HEDDAUS. The shadings of belief in this association are very great. Some are quite Trinitarian and orthodox in their theology; others as radical as THEO. PARKER. But all recognize that life is more important than thought, and a devout spirit than a formal doctrine. True Protestants in their refusal to bow to the authority of creeds or synods, it is to be hoped that they may attract to themselves the liberal religious elements of the German population in this country, and prove worthy co-laborers in the field of free religion and church reform.—C. W. W.

We receive from HIRAM A. REID, of DesMoines, Iowa, State Secretary of the Iowa Liberal League, a pamphlet of "Hymns of Liberalism," containing twenty-five hymns "written for Liberal Leagues and Free Religious Meetings." Most, if not all, of the hymns are new, and are written in such metres as allow them to be sung to common tunes. The thought expressed is decidedly radical, but the spirit is earnest and in many places devout.

Antioch College, (Yellow Springs, Greene Co., Ohio,) held its twenty-second annual commencement exercises on Wednesday, June 19. It was an unusually interesting occasion. The weather was perfect, and the college grounds never looked more beautiful. An unusual number of alumni was present, among them Revs. JAS. DENORMANDIE of Portsmouth, N. H., and M. J. MILLER of Geneseo, Ill. Seventeen of the twenty trustees of the institution were also met, summoned by grave considerations affecting the welfare of the college. Among those best known were Dr. H. W. BELLOWS of New York, EDW. EVERETT HALE, RUSH R. SHIPPEN and ADAMS AYER of Boston, Rev. J. H. HEYWOOD of Louisville, Ky., MURRY NELSON of Chicago, and Messrs. KEBLER, HOSEA and WENDTE of Cincinnati. The financial affairs of the college were the subject of earnest discussion, and were found to be in a more encouraging condition than had been expected. A bequest of $5000 from a friend in Kittery, Maine, was reported, together with various donations from other friends in the East and West. The deficiency from the past year was liquidated, and the college placed in a satisfactory condition for the year to come. The total number of students in all departments,—College, Normal and Academic—was reported at one hundred and thirty-four for the past year. Under the efficient presidency of Prof. S. C. DERBY, increased interest had been awakened. The graduating class was small, only three remaining to the close of the term to claim their degrees. Two past lady students also received their degree of A. M. By order of the trustees, henceforth a special examination will be required of all past graduates applying for degrees. Dr. BELLOWS delivered a wonderfully able and fervid address on the Opportunities and Responsibilities of Youth. There were the usual society and alumni meetings, and at the annual dinner the feast of reason and the flow of soul were delightful. The next day, many of the visiting friends attended the commencement of the neighboring Wilberforce (Colored) University. We trust liberals all over the West will not forget Antioch in choosing a school for their children. Located in the healthiest and loveliest spot in Ohio, with one of the finest college buildings in the State, an able faculty, an unsectarian control, and a high standard of scholarship, this "infidel college," as the Rev. JOSEPH COOK recently called it in a public lecture, is well worthy the support of our freest and most cultivated radicals. Send to the President for a circular and catalogue.—C. W. W.

A series of seven lectures on the "Origin and Growth of Religion, as illustrated by the Religions of India," has recently been given by MAX MUELLER in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. So many desired to hear them that they were given in the forenoon and again in the afternoon, and on both occasions to crowded houses. The first lecture was occupied with the question of the origin and nature of

religion. Prof. MUELLER laid much stress on the absolute necessity of defining religion, and knowing what it is, before we try to discuss its future. He repeated the definition of his "Introduction to the Science of Religion": "Religion is a mental faculty which, independent of, nay, in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names and under varying disguises. Without that faculty no religion, not even the lowest worship of idols and fetiches, would be possible; and if we will but listen attentively, we can hear in all religions a groaning of the spirit, a struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, a longing after the Infinite, a love of God." We regard this definition of religion given by Prof. MUELLER as worthy of especial attention. We shall consider it somewhat at length as soon as our space permits.

The following brave utterance on the subject of "Atheism" is from one of the later lectures. "There is an atheism which is unto death; there is another which is the very life-blood of all true faith. It is the power of giving up what, in our best, in our most honest moments, we know to be no longer true; it is the readiness to replace the less perfect, however dear it may have been to us, by the more perfect, however much it may be detested, as yet, by others. It is the true self-surrender, the true self-sacrifice, the truest truth in truth, the truest faith. Without that atheism no new religion, no reform, no reformation, no resuscitation, would ever have been possible; without that atheism no new life is possible for any one of us. In the eyes of the Brahmans, Buddha was an atheist; in the eyes of the Athenians, Socrates was an atheist; in the eyes of the Pharisees, St. Paul was an atheist; in the eyes of his Swiss judges, Servetus was an atheist. And why? Because every one of them was yearning after a higher and purer conception of God than what he had learnt as a child."

"On all sides and in all sects there are signs of a deepening love of truth and hungering for righteousness. The Power which sent Abraham forth as a solitary pioneer of faith in the Eternal, which raised up Jesus as the spiritual Prince of mankind, and which wrought from all the ancient civilizations the material wherewith to enrich our Christendom, was never busier than now. Not long shall we wait to bless the beautiful feet of newly-sent messengers from the King,—men who will show us the signs of his presence in our modern life, and teach those who are now disguised by different names to hail each other as brethren. We shall find the onward-leading path, not by looking bacwkard to Rome, or Geneva, or the old Jerusalem, nor by following the apostles of denial who only lead into blackness of darkness, but by welcoming every ray of light which God lets shine from past or present, and consecrating all knowledge as reverently as our fathers consecrated the law which came by Moses, and the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.—C. G. AMES.

"There's nothing in the Universe that I fear only that I shall not know all my duty, or shall fail to do it."—MARY LYON.

We are told that the Buddhist priests in Japan, aroused by the progress which Christian missions are making in their land, are vigorously collecting money to send missionaries of their own faith into Christian lands.

Rev. BROOKE HERFORD, in a speech at the Boston Anniversary meetings, said that a large proportion of the orthodox people in the West that he came in contact with, seemed desirous of convincing him that they did not differ much from him in belief after all.

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(Noticed by Mr. Gannett in No. 5, page 9.)

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